

# ADIRONDACK MURRAY

A BIOGRAPHICAL  
APPRECIATION BY  
HARRY V. RADFORD

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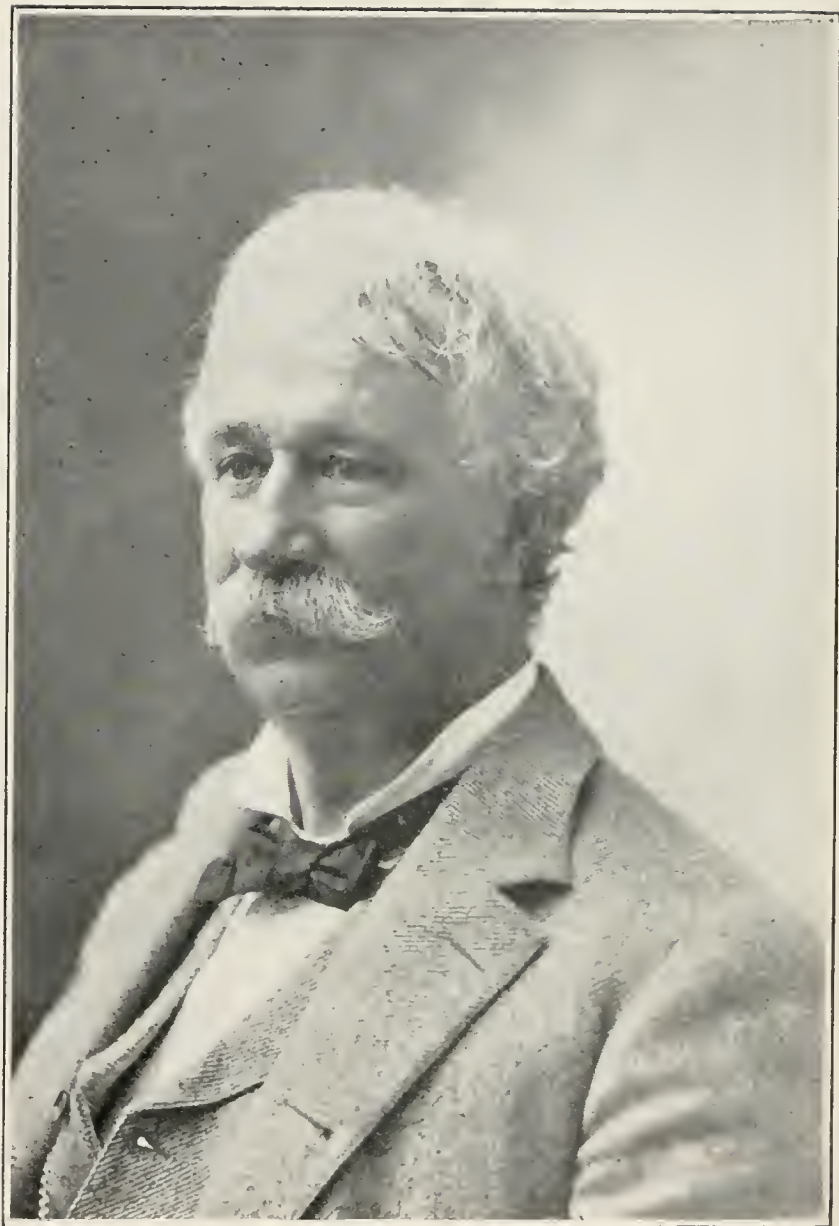




ADIRONDACK MURRAY







W. H. H. Murray

# ADIRONDACK MURRAY

A BIOGRAPHICAL APPRECIATION

By

HARRY V. RADFORD

*ILLUSTRATED*



NEW YORK  
833 Broadway

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ALPHABET  
YOUNG MEN  
OF AMERICA



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## NOTE

THIS simple biographical sketch of a national character, whom I had the privilege of knowing intimately, was first printed in the Autumn, 1904, number of *Woods and Waters*. It was originally written with no other object than to do a trifling honor to the memory of my illustrious friend; but soon after its initial appearance, a number of my own and Mr. Murray's friends asked me to put the bit of writing into book form, and offer it, between substantial

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covers, to the thousands of outdoor enthusiasts throughout the English-speaking world who revered the great sportsman-author and admired his writings.

I was the more willing to do this as Mr. Murray himself had expressed the desire that I should be his biographer; and we were even planning a series of visits to his Guilford homestead, during which I could take copious notes covering the entire period of his life, when that life was taken away, and with it the opportunity of gathering the fuller material for a more serious work.

The present sketch, however, is be-

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lieved to be historically accurate, so far as it goes; and I am heartily glad that while the great man was still in the flesh, I was able to gather, during our occasional meetings, sufficient matter concerning his every way remarkable career, to make possible even a partial fulfillment of his wish.

For some of the photographs herewith reproduced, I am indebted to the surviving members of Mr. Murray's family. Those of the Guilford Institute and the old town hall were kindly supplied by Mr. C. H. Scholey, editor of *The Shore Line Times*, of Guilford. The

## NOTE

remainder I took during different visits  
at the old homestead, between 1900 and  
1905. H. V. R.

NEW YORK, Oct. 15th, 1905.

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**U***NDER the wide and starry sky  
Dig the grave and let me lie:  
Glad did I live and gladly die,  
And I laid me down with a will.*

*This be the verse you grave for me:  
Here he lies where he long'd to be;  
Home is the sailor, home from sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill.*

—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.





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WHEN the Rev. William Henry Harrison Murray—whom the world knew as Adirondack Murray—expired at his ancestral homestead near Guilford, Conn., March 3, 1904, in the same room in which, sixty-four years before, he first saw the light, American sportsmanship lost one of its most conspicuous, brilliant and influential exponents, an orator surpassed by none stepped forever down from the public platform, and from the world of polished letters there vanished one of the

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strangest, strongest and most fascinating literary lights this country has ever known.

Among sportsmen Mr. Murray was the Frank Forester of his day. He typed the truest and most enthusiastic school of sport and nature lovers. He was a sportsman for the sport's sake. His prominence was preëminent, his position impregnable. He stood head and shoulders, in point of fame and achievement, above all of his contemporaries. He was one of the few great sportsmen America has produced. Even his presence was commanding. There was a magic in the very mention of his name. No one since

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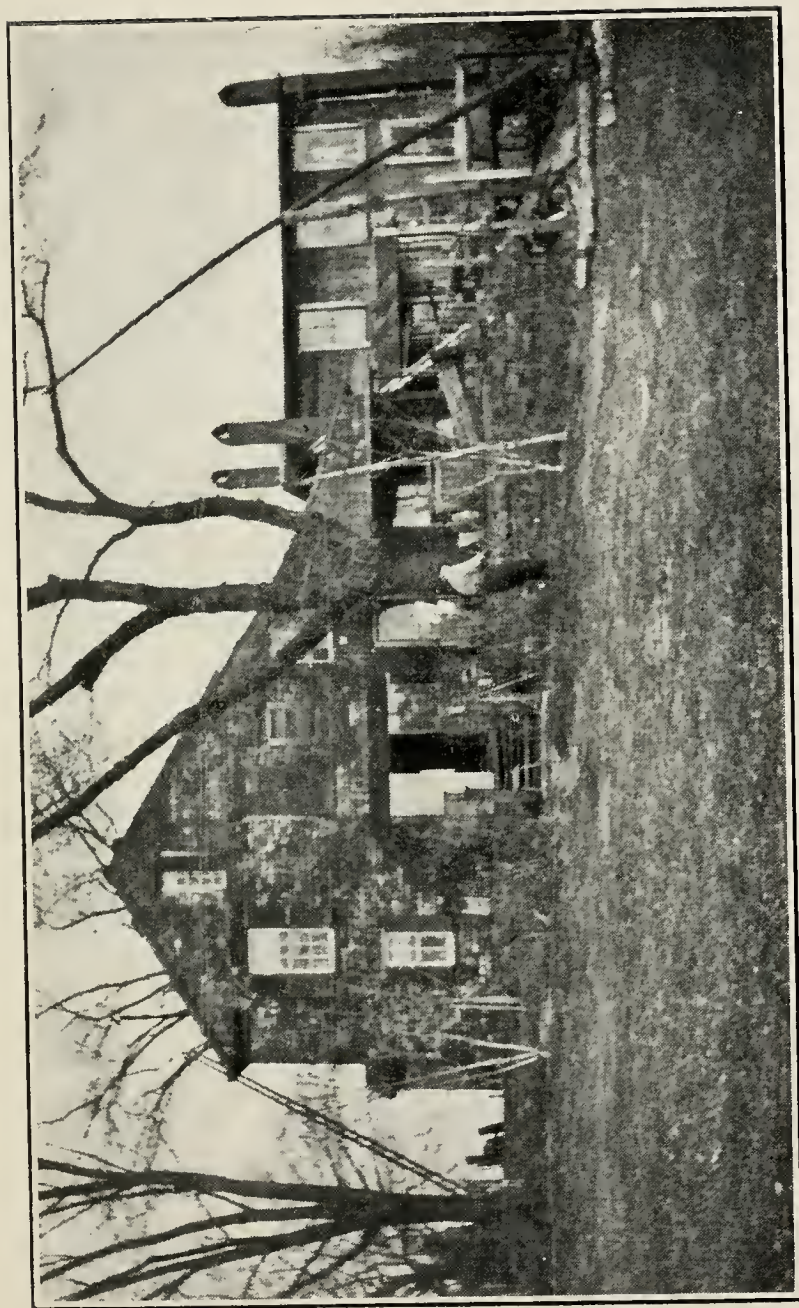
the Civil War, unless perhaps Charles Hallock, has been anywhere near so distinguished a sportsman as was Mr. Murray.

As an orator, preacher and lecturer he occupied, in his day, the very foremost place. He was in the front rank of great public speakers when Wendell Phillips and Henry Ward Beecher and Sumner and Gough and Brooks set the country on fire with their eloquence, and there are those who listened to every orator of note a generation ago who say he was superior to all. There has perhaps never been an American clergyman who held, continuously, such vast au-

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diences under the spell of his high rhetoric and persuasive delivery as did Mr. Murray during the years that he occupied Boston pulpits.

In the firmament of American letters, he is a star of the first magnitude, shining with a peculiar brilliance all his own. His stories of the woods and of woods life are classics, and will live as long as the love of sport and nature—which he did so much to cultivate—exists in the hearts of the American people. That his writings have passed into a permanent place in the affections of the people, and become thoroughly nationalized, could not better be shown



THE HISTORIC MURRAY HOMESTEAD, NEAR GUILFORD, CONN.,  
Where for ten generations the famous sportsman and author's ancestors have lived. Mr. Murray in the foreground.





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than by quoting at some length the words of an old Adirondacker in the West, writing a review of Mr. Murray's works some years ago:—



“There hangs my rifle; in the corner there are my rods; these skins upon my floor, that pile of traps, those two paddles, and all the joy and health and fun that they have brought to me—I owe it all to him. It was his writings that brought out the aboriginal in me, taught me what a wretched being a puny, sickly, scholarly (?) man is, and *drove* me into the wilderness after health and life, which, thank God, I found.

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“ ‘Critics’ and ‘reviewers’ do not and cannot give an author his actual placement in the world of letters. The people do that; the real author, like the president of a university, should be independent of and even indifferent to, temporary conditions. He should hold himself aloof from influences and tendencies that distract and degrade, and write and act out of the forces that are in him, and which make him. He should neither be bribed, nor intimidated, nor *commercialized*—that last and foulest ditch into which a literary man can stumble. And Murray, as it seems to us, has kept himself in this respect absolutely free from taint



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and stain. He is always natural, genuine, true.

“Writing on subjects which strongly tempt to extravagance, both in the direction of narrative and humor, and during a period of literary development when many of our writers have been bribed or forced by the prevalent conditions into a greater or less sensationalism of subject or treatment, he has resisted all pressures. He is probably so constituted that he is not susceptible to the overtures of private profit or popular fame; for he has kept on writing on the highest levels of English composition, and with provoking leisureliness, slowly

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producing a few volumes which, in his generation, must look for readers only among the most refined, the genial and cultivated of our communities. It is likely that he has acted thus out of the habit of his nature, which, during the period of his brilliant career as a public man, made him apparently indifferent to the eddying prejudices and opinions of that time, and gave to his oratory a frankness and fearlessness as unique as it was noble; but if calculation had been the moving cause, it is certain that he could not have acted more wisely, for his works, because of their excellent and attractive qualities, are sure to take their

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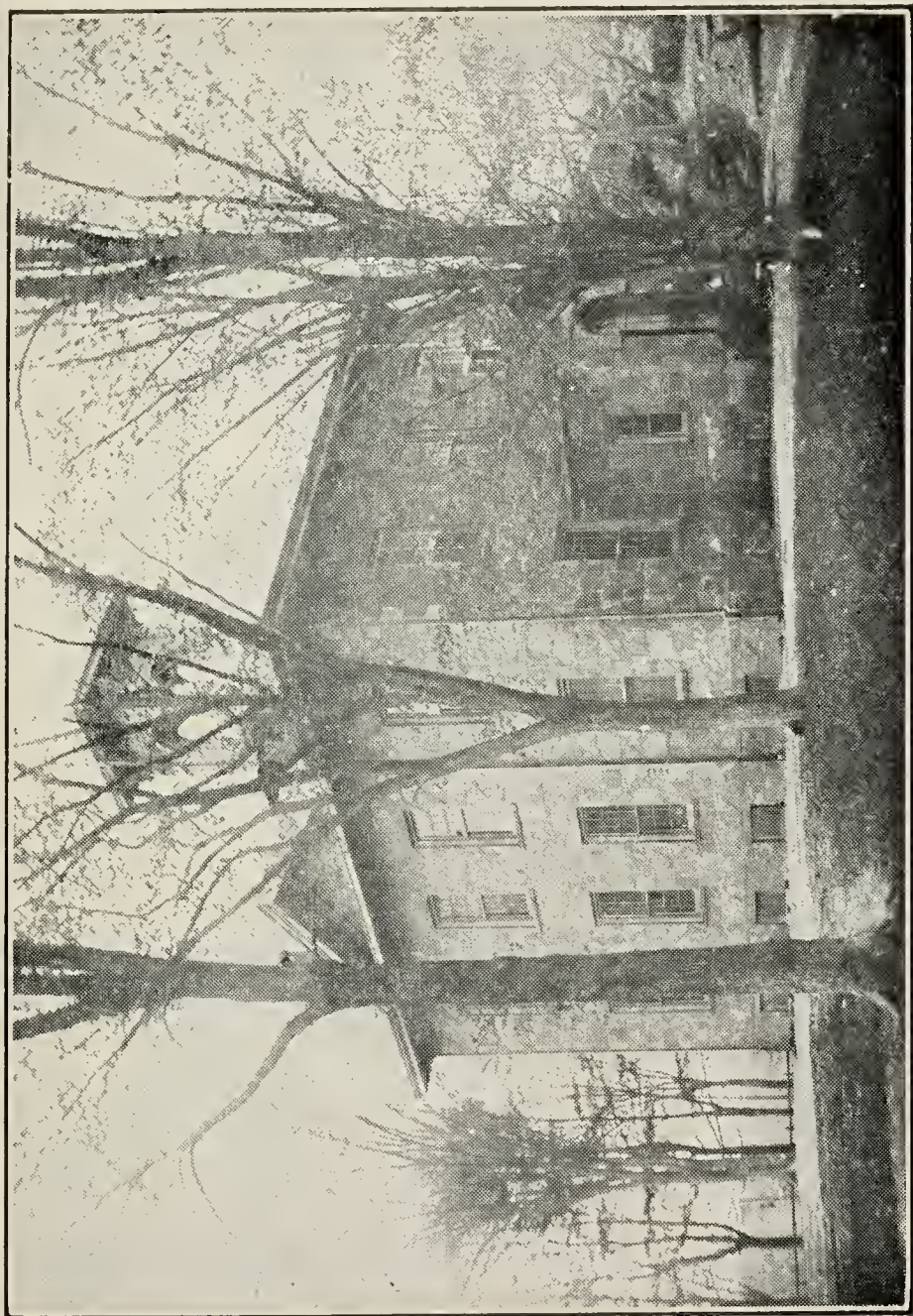
place in the permanent literature of the country.

“One thing is most remarkable. It is nigh on to thirty years since his first volume on the Adirondacks was issued from the press of Ticknor & Fields, then the foremost publication house of the country, with the title of *Adventures in the Wilderness*. Many of us can remember the furore that it created. It told us of a wilderness at our very doors, of mountains and lakes almost numberless that had never been measured or named; of a great natural sanitarium for those suffering from consumption and pulmonary conditions, almost in sight of the

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chambers where they lay stricken; of a natural resort for the overworked professional and business man, the nervously exhausted teacher, and overtaxed motherhood, where rest and revitalization could be obtained, and of a paradise for sportsmen not a hundred miles distant from the capital at Albany. How strange it seems to us of to-day, looking at the mammoth hotels and thousands of cottages and camps, which accommodate a quarter of a million of visitors each summer in the Adirondacks, that Murray's delightful revelation of the woods and wood-life *was not believed!* The caricaturist and cartoonist pounced upon







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the young author and handled him without gloves. Editors of great journals called the book a 'monstrous hoax,' and noted divines declared that 'he had disgraced his high station by thus practicing upon the people, especially the weakly and the sick, a cruel joke;' and those who took the volume as true and credible and started northward, were stigmatized as 'Murray's Fools.'

"But the little book, which, as Wendell Phillips once said, 'has kindled a thousand campfires and taught a thousand pens how to write of nature,' was not a 'cruel hoax,' but a truthful revelation, as all to-day know, and Murray had not

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only 'discovered a wilderness at our doors,' but discovered himself and a new field ready for American literature to enter and possess. But though thirty years have passed since his first book was published—and when before has such a success not bred imitators?—and though all his writings in the same general vein have been welcomed with increasing heartiness by the reading and lyceum public, nevertheless he remains to-day as he always has been, the sole representative on the platform and in authorship of a style of description and interpretation of nature that is as fresh and vital as herself, and of a humor that,



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while it never offends the most delicate and refined, is as provocative of laughter as humor can be. In explanation of this solecism in the world of successful writing it has been said that he is the only American that is master of expression and woodcraft both. But this, after our way of thinking, does not meet the case. It is an explanation that does not explain. The Old Trapper's explanation would probably be that he 'had nateral gifts for the work.' And after our own way of thinking that does explain it.

"The truth of it is, Murray's mind is a many-sided one, and his moods are as multiform as nature's. To borrow a

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figure from the lapidist, his mind is circular and cut into facets, and each facet is a mirror to reflect what stands over against it. Whoever will read his works, questioningly as to the source of his power, will be impressed with the interpretive and prophetic character of his words touching nature and of his wide and deep knowledge of her. His 'John Norton' is a myth—a creation of his imagination—for he has told us so, and indeed we can credit it, because there never was quite so good a man as the Old Trapper is, and never will be. As Mr. Murray humorously says: 'He had the privilege of making him

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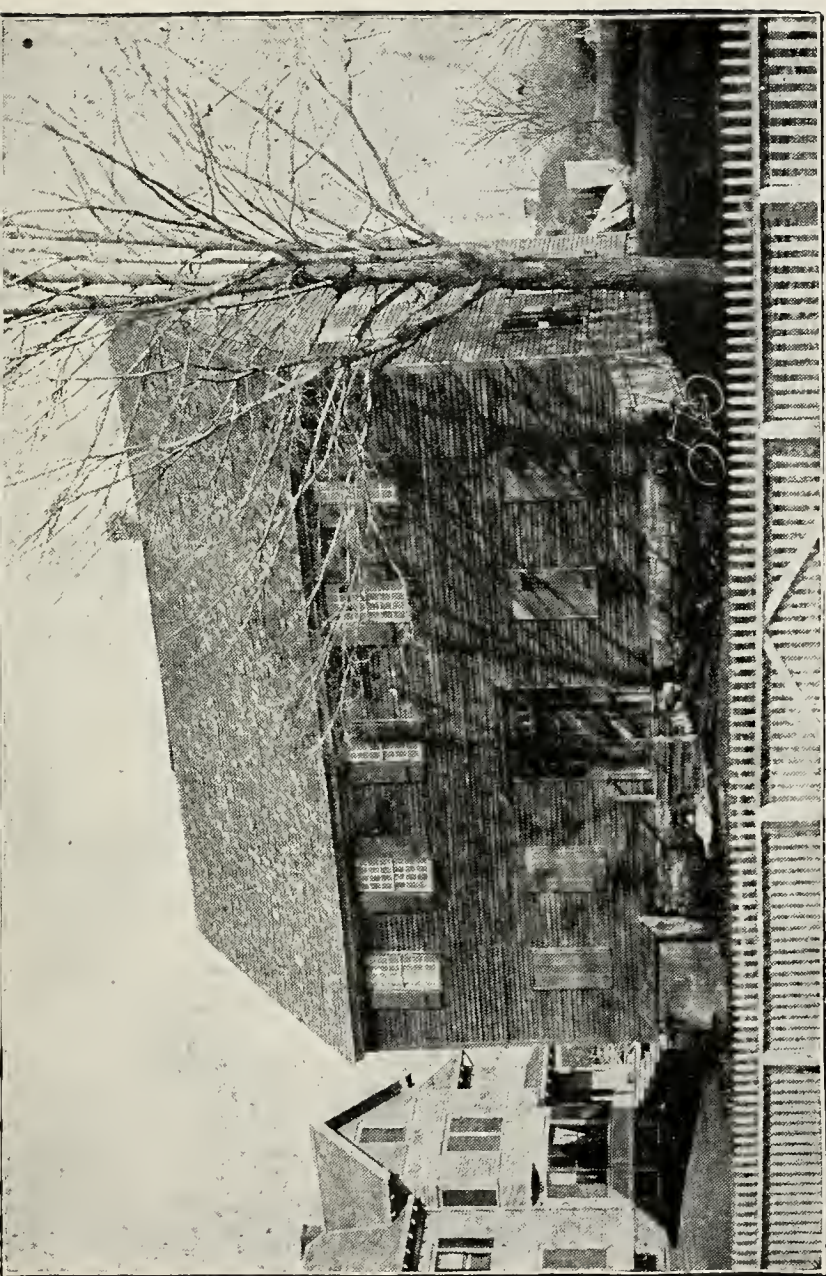
himself and so he made him perfect.

“But whence came John Norton’s knowledge of nature and men, his reverence and humor, his strong common sense and his shrewd wit, his intimate knowledge of nature in her every phase and detail of expression, his tenderness of feeling and strong sense of right and wrong, so old-fashioned and splendid, and his all-including wisdom which so often gives to his utterances the finality of supreme authority—whence came all these things to John Norton the Trapper?

“It is not the least of our surprises and pleasures in reading these works

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that when we are fully absorbed in the Old Trapper's sayings and doings, in the humor, the wisdom, and the piety of him, so that we are actually in the woods with him and he an actual and real human being with whom we are in closest touch and sympathy, we suddenly call to mind that this character, this Man of the Woods, who is so wholly and perfectly that and nothing else, is a creation of one born in New England, of university education, of civilized antecedents by heredity for two hundred and fifty years; a man of cities and crowds, a finished result, in manners, education and speech, of books and schools and of



THE OLD TOWN HALL AT GUILFORD.

Long since town down. Here the boy Murray made his first public appearances, in debates of the Clionian Society.





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platform appearances—that test and tax of highest development. And yet John Norton never slips or trips in speech, thought, imagery, or habit of life. He is ever the man of the woods, an old type New England man, with all the strong characteristics of the stock he represents, developed into a splendid manhood far away from cities and trade, the conventional customs and habits of civilization, a man so whole-hearted and wholesome, so clean and true, so brave and tender, that thousands write and speak of him as ‘Dear Old John Norton.’ New England never had pictured a nobler embodiment of the finest characteristics of her ances-

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tral stock. Their courage, their reverence and piety, their shrewd sense, their humor, and love of justice, all live again and free of accompanying defects, in this Trapper of the Woods.

“Of Mr. Murray’s relation to the outdoor life of the nation we need not speak, save in grateful acknowledgment of the services he has rendered to the American people in this direction. A rifleman, an angler, a canoeist, a yachtsman, a trailer and naturalist, an old-time camper, whose camp sites almost bisect the continent in both directions, the earliest advocate of outdoor life for women and children, he has well been called,



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'The Great Evangelist of Outdoor Life for the People.' We remember vividly what was the condition of things in New England when he began to preach and write and lecture. We remember when, as a young clergyman, he organized his first rifle club in the old conservative hill town of Washington, Litchfield county, Conn., the fame of which speedily became a sensation. We remember the gossip and scandal because he shot a rifle, competed with the members of his congregation in rifle matches, knocked 'sky balls' on the village common for the young men, members of the baseball team, shot woodchucks at long range for

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the farmers, and coasted and skated moonlight nights with the boys and girls of the town. It took stiff New England grit even to advocate, much less practice, in those days, habits of thought and conduct which to-day are universally accepted as right and wise. And here was a young man, misunderstood by some, suspicioned by others, abused by many, calmly and courageously urging the right of men and women to be their natural selves, advocating the liberties of the outdoor life and world, and pleading for that splendid physical and mental development which happy exercise in the open air would surely bring to them. What

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changes has he not caused and helped onward in the views, the opinions, the fashions, and habits of the people? Looking backward along the line of his life and his writings, the changes in the habits of our people seem incredible.

“In John Norton the Trapper he has created a character of the noblest dignity and grace. So true is it to the old New England type of manhood that as a portrait it has historical significance which will grow and deepen with the passage of time. Were it not for the ‘Leather Stocking’ of Cooper, ‘John Norton’ would stand absolutely sole in literature ; and even if one suggests the other,

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the resemblance is one of environment and not of nature and characteristics, for Murray's hero is as much nobler, wiser and more impressive than Cooper's as his knowledge of the continent and of woodcraft is superior. Cooper was a sailor, a naval officer, and his sea tales are of the very highest order. But when he came to write of the woods and wood-life, he wrote of what he had seen and known little, and hence unsatisfactorily to the highest criticism. But the creator of 'John Norton' knows the woods as Cooper knew the sea—his trails from north to south and from east to west have never been equaled by any other

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sportsman, naturalist, or geographer. He has seen and studied every phase of forest and frontier life, and the character of both races, and his knowledge of woodcraft—even as his too brief notes in *Mamelons* prove—is so full and accurate as to make us old campers and sportsmen, who know something of the woods ourselves, wonder. Among the mountains, on the plains, and in the recesses of that interminable forest of the north, he moves as easily from scene to scene, and with as much facility and precision, as Cooper upon the sea. When we reflect that the old conditions of life on our continent are fast passing away; that there

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will soon be no frontier life ; that the only connection that the children of the future can make with the old-time folk will be through literature, it is not too much to say that America owes him a tribute for preserving to future times a portrait of so noble a character, as type of their ancestors, as the Trapper. And especially does he deserve well of New England ; for in his John Norton, more than in any other character in literature, do the strength, the nobility, the courage, the reverence, the strong common sense, and the humor of the old-time New England man appear. To have created such a character and in such connections as to



MR. MURRAY IN SHOOTING COSTUME.

Taken while he was a young minister, in  
Meriden, Conn., about 1866.





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make him forever popular, while the love of nature, of outdoor life, and of interesting reading abides among us, is to have done what New England should not and will not forget."



I knew Mr. Murray well. We had a peculiar intimacy. He was, in many respects, a man after my own heart. There was no fraud or pretense in his love of nature. He did not belong to the school of authors who write of outdoor life because it is the literary fashion of the day, and who laboriously put together

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words to express an exaggerated and far-fetched admiration for the wild creation which they do not feel. He belonged to no school. He followed no literary customs. He inhabited no ruts. He was himself a school, which had a thousand imitators, but no rivals. Nor as a sportsman did he parade before the public his prowess with rifle or rod, or line his walls with staring, glass-eyed victims of the chase. He could have done so had he wished, for few have brought to earth a greater variety of North American game animals, or shot them in regions more widely separated, than this master of marksmanship and Grand Old Man

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of the field. As I have said, he was a patron of sport for the sheer love of the sport, caring nothing who heard of his triumphs in the field, and seldom mentioning the taking of a life even in his discourses upon the chase. Of his sporting implements, of which he possessed a fine collection, he was most fond. These he loved to fondle and inspect. A thousand times in the evening of his life, as he sat before the picturesque old fireplace in his beloved New England farmhouse, would he glance up at the famous double muzzle-loading rifle (made by Lewis, of Troy) and the historic paddle, which hung above the mantel. Few guests were

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bidden to his venerable homestead<sup>1</sup> during his latter years (though Mr. Murray was a man with whom hospitality was a pleasure), and these were always kindred spirits—men who he knew could enjoy his reminiscences of old-time sport, who had a relish for literature and a contemplative temperament, who could appreciate and admire with him the beauties of his rural surroundings, and, above all, who were enthusiastic lovers of the woods. I was one of those who knew his home as an occasional visitor—the

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<sup>1</sup> Built more than one hundred years ago, the original building, on the same spot, having been erected in the early part of the seventeenth century.

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youngest of his group of intimates. And mine is one of those "thousand pens" which he "taught to write of nature"—albeit the lesson is as yet but poorly learned.

Mr. Murray came of a sturdy New England ancestry that, since their landing in America, more than one hundred years previous to the French and Indian War, had always been attached to the soil—the stock that has produced most of the great writers and thinkers of the land. The farm on which he was born, April 26, 1840, and where he died—popularly known as "The Murray Homestead"—had been in the possession of his ances-

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tors for over two centuries and a half. Mr. Murray was proud of the ancient family ownership of his lands, and was fond of retelling to his children the family tradition, which had been handed down from generation to generation, concerning the great buttonwood tree which stands a short distance from the house, and which is said to have been planted two hundred and sixty years ago by an Indian medicine-woman, or witch. Tradition has it that incantations accompanied its planting, and that a spell was put upon it which would never permit the land on which it stood to pass permanently from the family so long as it stood

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and lived, but that should it ever, while still living, be felled by ax or blown down in a storm, the farm would pass forever into the hands of strangers. It is needless to say that that tree has ever been regarded with the utmost solicitude, and the greatest care taken that it should receive no injury.

Mr. Murray's career was a shining example of a "self-made man"—of the rise of an humble New England farmer lad into worldly prominence and worth. His parents were poor, but respectable. At seven he began to earn his own living. At fourteen he read all the books he could lay his hands on. He earned the

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money to pay for his tuition at the Guilford Institute by threshing wheat and other labors upon the neighbors' farms, and it is said that his services were eagerly sought, as his great strength and activity enabled him to perform a larger day's work than most of the men could do. He used to walk bare-footed each day four miles from his home to the school and back again at night—except when he consented to remain over night in Guilford and room with one or other of the boys, which, because of his happy disposition and popularity, he was frequently importuned to do. Indeed, so highly was his companionship valued that



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it is said there existed a spirited rivalry among the students as to who would next entertain young "Bill" Murray. Even in those early years he evinced a decided tendency to football, woods roaming, eloquence, and English composition. He was handsome and good-natured and powerfully built, full of life and enthusiasm, and always a leader among his fellows.

Those were the days of the old New England lyceum and of debating societies. The men of Guilford, like the men of scores of other New England villages, had their local society. The younger element got little or no opportunity of par-

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ticipating in the debates, which in those days constituted a form of popular amusement. This state of affairs greatly incensed the young fellows, who envied their elders' triumphs of the platform, and could not see why they should be shut out from displaying their own oratorical abilities before the villagers in the town hall. Discussion ran high, and the wrongs of the young men grew, as they thought, more intolerable. Finally, the dissatisfaction broke out into open rivalry at a suggestion from Murray. "I say, boys," he exclaimed one morning as, somewhat breathlessly, and swinging his arms in

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his enthusiasm, he came hastening up to a group of his schoolmates who were clustered near the Institute building just previous to entering to begin the day's studies, discussing with heat an unusually successful debate which the grown-ups had conducted before a large audience the evening before, "let's all go up to J. Russel's room to-night and organize a society of our own." The plan met with clamorous approval. The proposed meeting was held that evening and the "Clio-nian Society" duly organized. Young Murray became one of the officers. Public debates were at once inaugurated, and in a short time the new society became

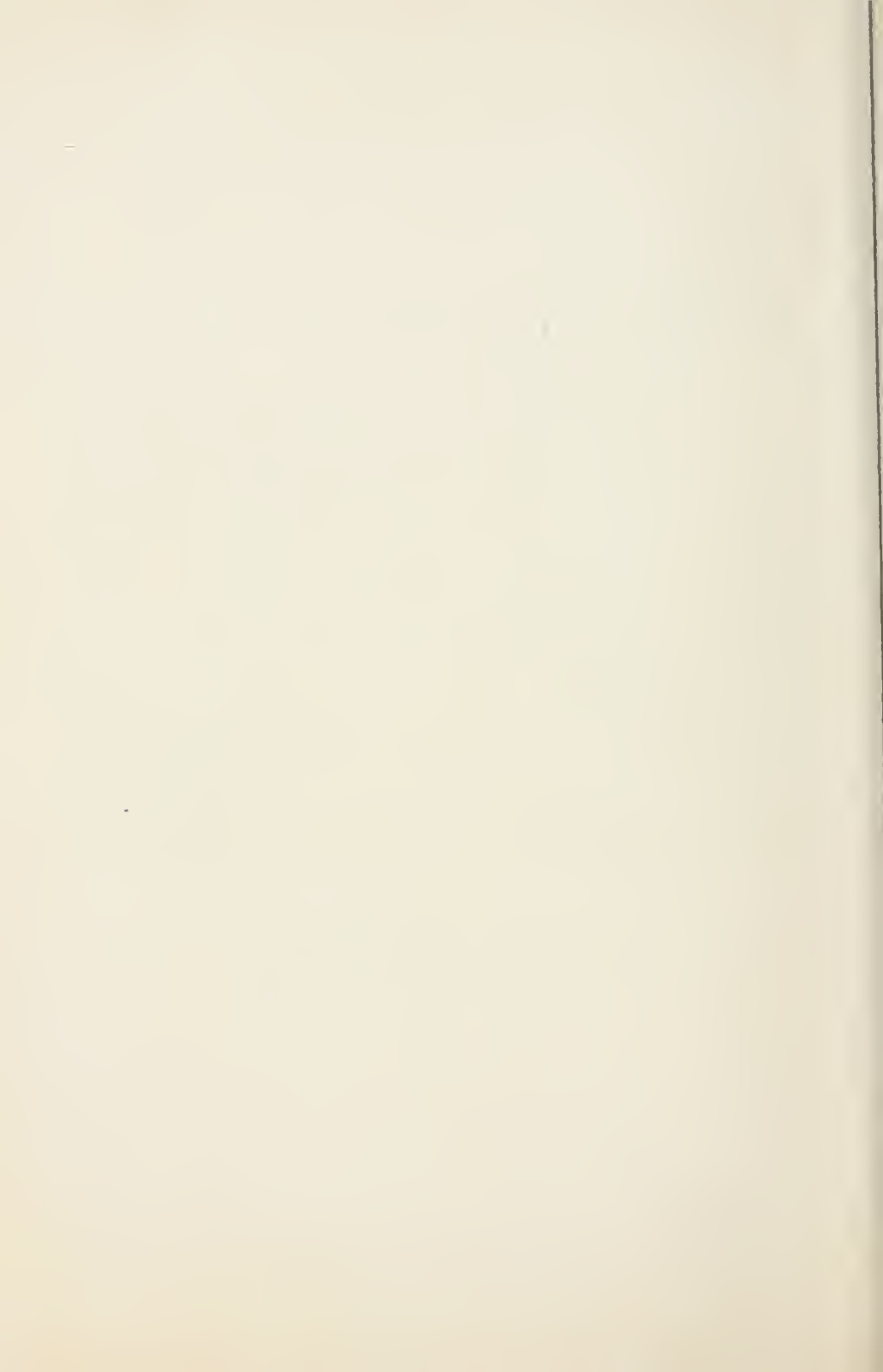
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so popular with the townspeople that the older organization was forced to disband because the entire patronage of the villagers had gone over to the tyros. The young bloods had the field entirely to themselves, and old residents of Guilford say that for several years the town hall was packed upon every occasion that the young men appeared in public. Out of that little country debating society have come a number of notable orators. One of them—the greatest of them—was William H. H. Murray.

Murray had determined, without any encouragement from his parents, to work his way through college. Soon after



MURRAY'S ISLAND, RAQUETTE LAKE.  
From a woodcut in Wallace's "Descriptive Guide to the  
Adirondacks," edition of 1872.



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completing his studies at the Institute, he set out on foot for New Haven, nineteen miles distant from his farm—and entered Yale College. He had \$4.68 in his pocket and two small carpet-bags in his hands—one with his few books and the other with his few clothes. Murray's old neighbors at Guilford have told me that in order to save his boots from wear, he was wont, when walking back and forth between Guilford and New Haven, to carry them under his arm, not putting them on until about to enter town. When he started for Yale, some of the neighbors said, one to the other: "Wonder what Bill Murray thinks he can make

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of himself?" But "Bill" Murray paid little attention to their jests. He had, as he said, "taken hold of the hope of knowledge with a good grip, and he held on." During the summers he worked hard upon his own and neighboring farms in order to earn money to pay for his college education, and each fall he was back at Yale, a close student, a prodigious reader, always good-natured, full of sport, and loving nothing better than an opportunity to spend an afternoon afield with a gun or along some familiar angling stream. His classmates at Yale included Franklin McVeigh, Joseph Cook, Professor Ely and Governor



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Lounsbury, of Connecticut. The late William C. Whitney was in his class for some time, but graduated a year after Mr. Murray.

A single fact will illustrate the rapid progress which Mr. Murray made in his studies while at college. Fitz-Greene Halleck, the immortal author of "Marco Bozaris," was a fellow townsman of Murray's, and though much his senior in years, they were intimate friends, mutual admirers and frequent visitors at each other's homes. It is said that Halleck taught Murray much of literature and poetry. Recently the story had gained currency that Murray had learned his

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Greek from his illustrious neighbor, and that the former often walked out from New Haven to Guilford to take Greek lessons from the great poet. The facts are quite the contrary. Halleck knew little of Greek until instructed in this language by his young friend, Murray, who early in his college course became so proficient that he was able to translate for Halleck a letter which the latter had received from the Greek government stating that the poem, "Marco Bozzaris," had been translated into Greek, printed in that language and widely distributed among the Greeks with the object of increasing their patriotism.

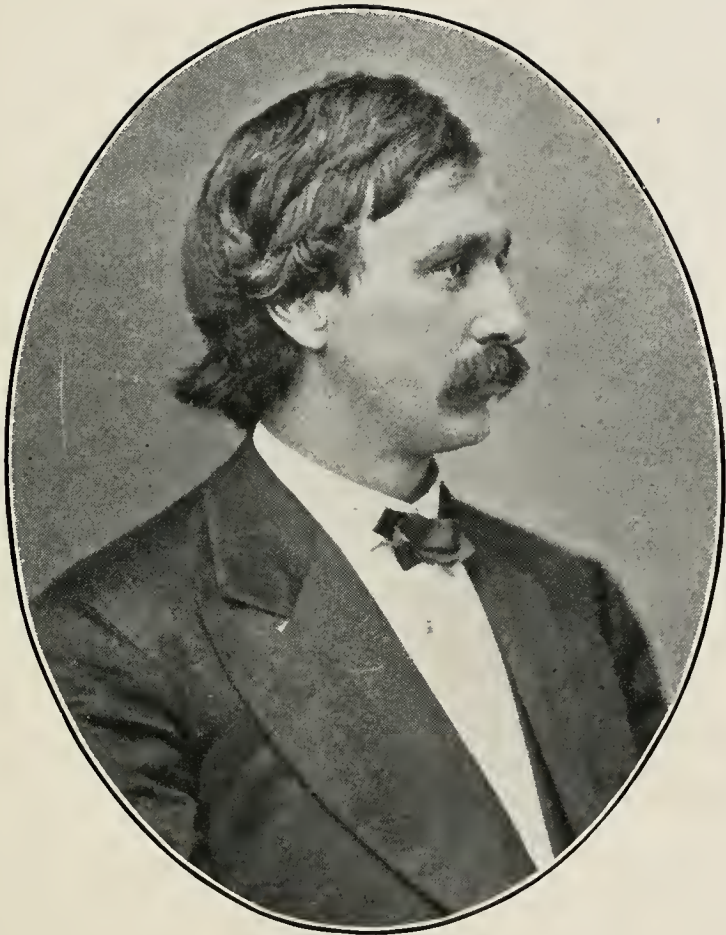
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At Yale Murray won prizes for debating and essay writing, and upon his graduation in 1862 entered an advanced class of the East Windsor Theological Seminary, continuing his studies under the Rev. Dr. Edwin Hatfield, of New York City, serving as his assistant pastor until the latter's resignation. From New York he was called successively to Congregational pulpits in Washington, Greenwich and Meriden, Conn.

While at Washington, Conn., an incident occurred which is amusing, and which showed the marked personality of the man rather more markedly than the decorous parishioners of that con-

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servative village believed to be edifying. Mr. Murray never lost an opportunity to spend a day gunning on the hills surrounding the village. One evening he was unusually late in returning. A religious service was scheduled to occur that night in the church, and the parishioners, as usual, assembled in the edifice, eager, as ever, to hear Mr. Murray's beautiful discourses upon spiritual subjects. The time set for the commencement of the service arrived, but no preacher appeared. The congregation waited and wondered and grew impatient. Questioning glances were exchanged, and whisperings grew into ani-



W. H. H. MURRAY, AGE 37.

Photograph taken in 1877, when Mr. Murray was  
at the zenith of his Boston fame as  
preacher and author.



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mated conjecturing as to what could have befallen their handsome and talented young pastor. Even displeasure was beginning to be expressed among those whose tempers were the easiest ruffled, at being thus brought from their homes for nothing, when the door of the church burst suddenly open, and in strode the belated preacher, quite heated from hurrying, dressed in his shooting-jacket and velvetreen breeches, and carrying in his hand his game-bag and fowling-piece. Without making excuse for his unorthodox garb, or changing the same for ministerial vestments, he quietly hung the game-bag over the back of a convenient

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chair, leaned the gun against the wall, mounted the pulpit, and opened the service. At the close he begged forgiveness of his hearers for having kept them so long waiting, explaining that it was wholly unintentional on his part, but that he had strolled so far in his eager pursuit of game without noting the flight of the hours that it was impossible for him to get back to the village at the time set for the service; in fact, he had come direct from the field to the church without pausing to taste a mouthful of supper, in order that he might not delay the congregation a moment longer than could possibly be helped.



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From Meriden Mr. Murray was called to the Park Street Church in Boston, then one of the most prominent pulpits in America. It was in Boston that he earned his greatest fame, and won his richest laurels as preacher, orator and lecturer.

To say that his career as a public man from this moment was phenomenal, does not convey an idea of the meteoric swiftness and brilliance of his rise as a man of national fame and importance. He fairly took Boston by storm. Within a few weeks after his advent in the city, the entire country was talking of the wonderful powers of per-

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suasion and masterly oratory of the young clergyman who had but recently come from an obscure Connecticut farm.

While yet in his twenties he was composing sermons which were being circulated and quoted throughout the entire continent, and even in Europe, and which to this day, after a lapse of nearly forty years, are constantly reprinting. At thirty he was considered one of the intellectual giants of America ; and within the next few years was receiving a salary and perquisites of \$15,000 to \$20,000, besides earning \$10,000 additional annually upon the lecture platform. A

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single lecture upon the Adirondacks, he delivered before over five hundred audiences. For several years he edited and published the *Golden Rule*, a weekly, "one of the few brilliant literary and artistic religious papers of its day."

In the spring of 1869 his first work—*Adventures in the Wilderness; or Camp Life in the Adirondacks*—was published by Ticknor & Fields, which gave him his well-known sobriquet. It became at once the most popular book of the day, reached an enormous circulation, and created what is probably the most remarkable movement of hunters, anglers and campers towards an Ameri-

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can wilderness in the history of sport on this continent.<sup>1</sup>

Murray's triumph was now complete. Besides enjoying a popularity in the pulpit not surpassed by that of Henry Ward Beecher, who was his

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<sup>1</sup> The "Murray Rush"—still a familiar memory in the Adirondacks—began early in the summer of 1869, and continued unabated for four or five seasons, during which the Woods were so filled with visitors—every one of whom seemed to carry a copy of Mr. Murray's book—that the few rude hotels then in existence were utterly inadequate to accommodate the crowds; and guides were equally insufficient. Log cabins, barns and tents were converted into lodging places; every old, battered scow boat or dugout that could be resurrected commanded a fabulous rental; and all the farm boys who could possibly be spared from home were pressed into serv-

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warm friend, he was the literary lion of his day. Because of his magnificent physique and handsome countenance, his affable and gracious manners, his distinguished presence, his deep learning and his religious fervor, his com-

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ice as guides, at wages not infrequently double that received at present by the most experienced woodsmen. Hundreds, who, upon reading Mr. Murray's narrative, had left at once for the North Woods without even writing ahead for accommodation, upon arriving at the terminus of some stage-line entering the Wilderness—perhaps after a nerve-wracking ride of forty or fifty miles over an abominable corduroy road,—finding that neither guides, boats nor quarters were procurable, were obliged to return at once, bag and baggage, to the railroad. And yet, despite the extraordinary numbers and consequent confusion, the fullest good humor prevailed.

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panionship was courted by the lights of the country. The greatest statesmen, the most noted divines, the most prominent authors, the leaders of thought and the moulders of opinion, sought acquaintance with the remark-

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The Wilderness has never since presented a scene of such picturesque animation. Many of the visitors, drawn toward the Adirondacks by the entrancing pen-pictures of the young Boston clergyman, were women and children; and all seemed imbued with the spirit of keen sport and frolic which was so well known to characterize their great preceptor, Murray. Every incoming stage-coach from the railroad—then thirty to sixty miles distant—was loaded down with sportsmen and outers, carrying rods and rifles, and bent on seeing as much as possible of the wonderful new region of health and happiness which Murray had so wonderfully de-

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able young clergyman. Dinners were given in his honor by the most distinguished personages in Boston and the country at large. Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Hawthorne, Halleck, Agassiz, Prescott, Beecher,

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scribed; while behind the coaches, creaking and groaning beneath their burdens, lumbered the slower moving wagons, heaped high with the trunks, portmanteaux, tents, bales of blankets, and other baggage of the sight-seers. Throughout the wilderness proper the same gay activity was everywhere in evidence. Boatloads of jolly campers and sportsmen, with their guides and outing *impedimenta*, were constantly passing and repassing along the principal waterways, which in those days were the only avenues of communication leading towards the choicest sporting sections of the Woods. The carries and trails were thronged. Every log-cabin



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Phillips, Fields—to name his personal friends and acquaintances would be to call the roll of the great men of his time. For ten years every Sabbath ser-

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halfway house, situated on lake or river bank, which made any pretension at all of providing either food or shelter, was at all times the centre of a motley gathering,—sure to be interesting as well as picturesque,—in which sportsmen and sportswomen from different States, togged out in every shade and degree of fashion, and lack of it, guides, lumbermen, trappers, and an occasional red Indian, mingled in a true backwoods democracy that was at once pleasant, amusing and inspiring. The spirit of fellowship and hospitality extended to every camp, and wherever smoke curled upward from any shore, it was a sign of welcome to any who might chance to pass that way.

Thousands who came to this region for the first time, attracted by Mr. Murray's book,



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mon that he preached was printed and sent broadcast throughout the land.

There was one gathering of notables at which Mr. Murray was present which I shall mention, for the reason that it had a most important bearing

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found in the Wilderness charms not even enumerated in that volume, and, forming an attachment for the country, repeated their visits, year after year, becoming gradually more interested in the region itself, and in the preservation of its natural attractions, than in the taking of game or fish; so that in time there grew up the present splendid body of men and women—the life-guard of the Wilderness—who, from their long association with the Adirondacks, their known love for, and efforts in behalf of, its forests and their wild inhabitants, and their interest in its history, literature and legendary lore, have come to be designated as “Adirondackers”

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upon his later literary work. It was a dinner given by the famous publisher and literatus, James T. Fields, to a number of prominent authors.

Emerson was there. During the evening the conversation turned upon the

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—a title that is a just pride to those who can claim it. It is to these men and women that the public rightfully look to form and guide the policy of the State with reference to the Adirondack Park, and to exercise a check upon any who, through selfishness or ignorance, might endanger aught of its natural attractiveness or value to the people.

The Murray Rush gave birth to the guide book period in the Adirondacks, which followed closely, as a natural sequence, early in the seventies. The few hotels were enlarged, and new ones built to meet the ever-increasing demand. Hundreds of sturdy woodsmen adopted the honorable and not unremunera-

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question as to what constituted a truly "great" story. Mr. Emerson defined it as one which would evoke both tears and laughter. The definition impressed Mr. Murray. Later, discussion arose con-

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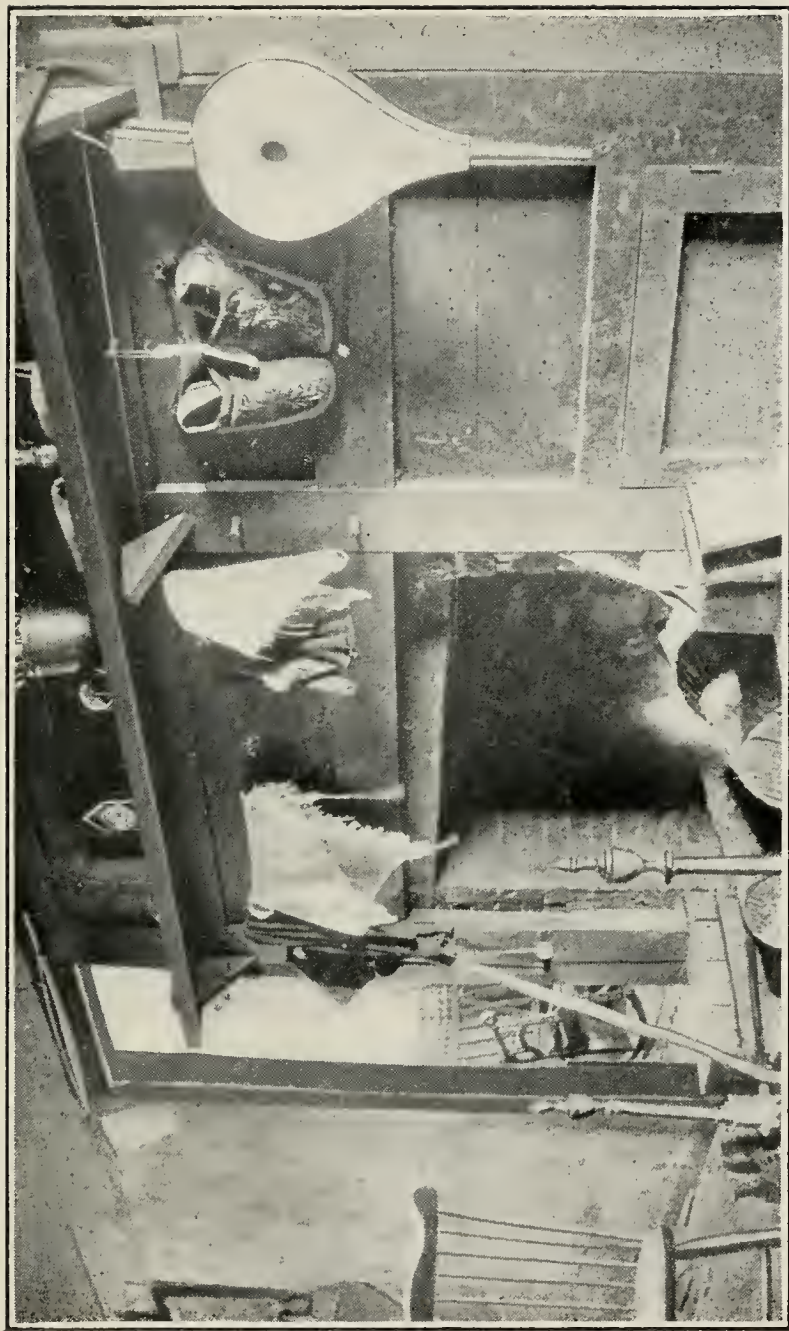
tive profession of guides; and from that time on the Adirondacks—which previous to the appearance of Murray's magic book had remained an unvisited waste, known only to a few adventurous sportsmen, hunters and trappers—continued to grow in general popularity and fame, until, at the present time, with railroads penetrating to its choicest localities and good carriage roads radiating in many directions, with hundreds of hotels—many of them palatial in construction and furnishing—and full as many public and private camps, some of which are not less luxurious, these Woods are annually visited by not less than 450,000 persons, and their glories have reached to the uttermost ends of the earth.

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cerning the reason why "great" stories such as Mr. Emerson had defined were never written which did not contain at least one female character. After most of the company had been heard from, "Parson" Murray was called upon to

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For all this, in large measure, we have pioneer Murray to thank. Some persons, as Charles Hallock quotes, have deprecated the "ruinous publicity" given by Mr. Murray to the sporting attractions of the Adirondacks, lamenting that this exceptional region should have "fallen from that estate of fish and solitude for which it was originally celebrated." But, while it is true that, to a large degree the wildness and exclusiveness of the Adirondacks have been modified by the myriad changes which have come to this region since 1869, and while to some extent the forests have been thinned and the game diminished, yet the writer holds the view, that, for the



THE FIREPLACE AND MANTEL IN THE MURRAY HOMESTEAD.

Above the latter, the woodwork of which is 260 year's old, hung Mr. Murray's famous old Lewis rifle, his paddle, powder-horn and drinking-cup.





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give his views. He expressed the opinion that it would be possible to compose a story that would be up to Mr. Emerson's definition, and yet which would not include a single female character.

Fields never forgot what Murray had said, and whenever he met the latter he was sure to remind him of the state-

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increased facilities of ingress and improved accommodation which his exploitation of the Adirondacks brought about, thereby enabling thousands to enjoy the incalculable benefits to body, mind and soul which life in these Woods affords, where formerly they were within reach only of the individual. Murray has put humanity—and especially the people of New York State and of the United States—under a debt of gratitude that can not be easily estimated, and can less easily be repaid.

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ment he had made at the dinner, and to urge him to write such a story. In course of time Murray composed the first story of his series of "Adirondack Tales," with the great character of John Norton the Trapper as their central figure. He published it in his *Golden Rule*. Fields read the story and went at once to congratulate its author. "Murray, you have done it!" he exclaimed; "you have written a story that is up to Emerson's definition—for I have both laughed and wept over this one; and you have not introduced a woman into it."

All during these years Mr. Murray was devoting every moment which he



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could spare from his clerical duties to the pursuit of outdoor sports, to travel, and to literature. In 1864 he made his first trip to the Adirondacks, continuing to visit this region annually until 1877. Even in the wilderness, his activities were on a large scale. He cruised on countless waters, trailed far and wide, and carried his explorations into the wildest and remotest corners of the Great Forest. During the fourteen seasons that he patronized this region, he brought a large following of personal friends with him into the Woods, his immediate party sometimes numbering as high as twenty or thirty, including

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guides ; for, as might be expected in one so genial and generous of nature, Mr. Murray was fond of human companionship, and human companionship was fond of him. Among those who thus accompanied him into the Woods (many of whom were of national fame, chiefly clergymen and authors) was the late United States Senator O. H. Platt, of Connecticut, who for many years was one of his best beloved camp-mates and sporting associates.

Not always did Mr. Murray travel in company when in the Woods, for often he entirely abandoned his friends, severed communication with even the rude

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civilization of the forest encampment, and, with a single guide for companion, plunged into the most labyrinthian recesses of the then little-known Wilderness, where for days and weeks at a time he buried himself in the untrodden wilds.

It was during these solitary expeditions, doubtless, that he gathered most of that wondrous fund of woods-lore and woods-wisdom which gives to his literary productions the stamp of the master, and it was chiefly while engaged in such explorations that he performed those feats of strength, agility, hardihood and endurance, and those exploits with rifle,

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rod, paddle and oar, of which, to this day, the traveler in the Adirondacks will encounter so many tales and anecdotes, especially among the old-time guides and woodsmen who are able to boast the distinction of having, at one time or another, companioned with this Patron Saint of Adirondackers. Mr. Murray's favorite camp site was undoubtedly the rocky little island in Raquette Lake, near the mouth of Marion River, which now goes so appropriately by the name of Murray's Island, and which in future years is sure to become a famous literary shrine and a gathering place of sportsmen and nature lovers from all

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quarters of the continent.<sup>1</sup> His favorite guide was the great woodsman, "Honest John" Plumley, of Long Lake, who became celebrated as the leading character

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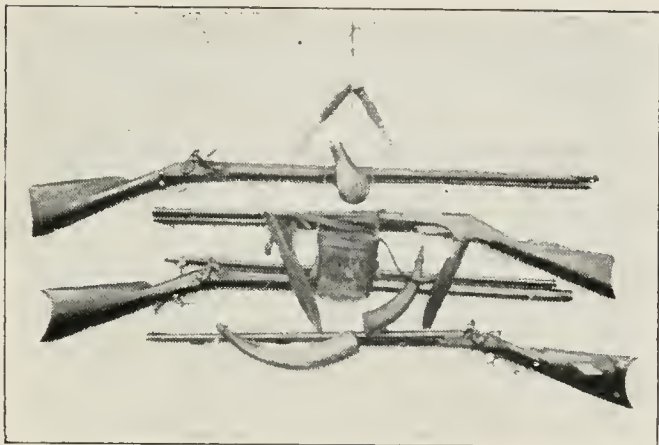
<sup>1</sup> Murray's Island, fortunately, is State land, a portion of the proposed but long delayed Adirondack Park, which, when all its area has been purchased by the State (as it should be at once), will include approximately 3,475,000 acres, and will be the grandest public domain in the world. It was upon this islet that Mr. Murray for many years had his permanent camp known as "Terrace Lodge." Here he frequently found time to compose portions of his earlier books, and from this point, as a centre, he set out upon his numerous excursions into the deeper wilderness. Some persons have attempted to supplant the historic and significant name of Murray's Island (given it in loving recognition and remembrance by the people) with the pretty but far less worthy one of Osprey

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in Murray's first book, *Adventures in the Wilderness*. From time to time he brought out a new volume of Adirondack stories, all of which have obtained

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Island; and against this apparent forgetfulness of a great man I make earnest protest. Wallace, the Adirondack annalist, says in his Descriptive Guide (page 430, edition of 1897): "This island was so named (Murray's Island) because for years it was the favorite camping place of W. H. H. Murray, author of several charming volumes on the Adirondacks. And yet, neither lake nor mountain commemorates the name of him who opened the eyes of the world to this grand sanitarium and pleasure ground!" Let us at least insist that his name shall be perpetuated in the single little island to which, more than any other spot in the Wilderness, he was attached, and which (he has himself told me) he would be best pleased to have bear his name.



MR. MURRAY'S FAVORITE SPORTING ARMS.

The flintlock, formerly his father's, and the gun of his boyhood; the .44 cal. Winchester repeater, which he carried on most of his hunting trips in later life; the heavy tournament rifle, with telescope, with which he performed his greatest feats of marksmanship; and the old, highly-ornamented double Lewis of Troy, (muzzle-loading) rifle, "Never Fail," which he acquired in early young-manhood and continued to use as a hunting arm long after the introduction of the breech-loader.





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a wide circulation, though the book by which he is best known is his first work.

At the age of forty he retired from the clerical profession, and for seven years traveled almost continuously in Europe, Africa and America, visiting every State and Territory of this country, and penetrating far into the recesses of northern Canada. He wrote copiously, but always well, and besides issuing numerous books on sport, travel, history and education, was a frequent contributor to the prominent magazines and newspapers. "Sport, history, nature in all her moods, romance and story capit-

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ulated to his fascinating pen." Again he took the lecture platform, and toured the country, speaking on a variety of subjects, but more often reading extracts from his published works. "How John Norton the Trapper Kept His Christmas" he had read before half a thousand audiences, receiving as high as \$100 to \$500 a night for his entertainment. An idea of the immense popularity of his writings may also be had from the fact that, up to the time of his death, his profits from the sale of the "Adirondack Tales" alone had amounted to \$58,000.

The last twelve years of his life Mr. Murray had lived almost continuously

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on his Guilford homestead, spending his time in cultivating his farm, and in the private education of his four daughters, and devoting all of his leisure to authorship and the revision of his published works.

The latter comprise: "*Adventures in the Wilderness*," "*The Perfect Horse*," "*Adirondack Tales*" (including "*The Story the Keg Told Me*" and "*The Man Who Didn't Know Much*"), "*Holiday Tales*" (including "*How John Norton the Trapper Kept His Christmas*" and "*John Norton's Vagabond*"), "*The Old Trapper's Thanksgiving*," "*The Busted ex-Texan; or, the Story of the Man Who*

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*Missed It," "Mamelons," "Ungava," "Daylight Land," "How Deacon Tubman and Parson Whitney Kept New Year's, and Other Stories," "Lake Champlain and Its Shores," "Deacons," "The Old Apple Tree's Easter,"* and numerous collections of sermons, lectures, addresses and humorous sketches. His last work was published but a few years before he died, and was a description of *"How I Am Educating My Daughters,"* and received a notable reception at the hands of the public.

Mr. Murray was the same ardent sportsman and passionate lover of nature up to the last. Even during the final



MR. MURRAY AND HIS ELDEST DAUGHTER.

Taken in 1896.



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years of his life he occasionally allowed himself a fox-chase in the woods and fields surrounding his farm, continuing to be an expert marksman until increasing years and failing sight interfered with his once perfect powers. Nor did he, as the years passed by, lose any of the courtliness of manner or splendid presence (never so fine as when with his crown of white hair he was seen as a familiar figure driving through the streets of Guilford accompanied by one or more of his young daughters) which had in earlier life contributed so much to make him a national celebrity. Until the end, he was always the same cheer-

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ful, energetic, enthusiastic Murray that he was so well known to be "when the life within sparkled white to the brim, and all flowers were lilies, and all lilies were sweet, and the woods were striated with perfumes which blew from the meadows of heaven."

The home life of his latter years was indeed beautiful. His love for his children and theirs for him was most tender and touching. There is a picture before my mind, as I write these words, which I count one of my treasures of memory, and which time will never efface. It is of a great man, in the evening of life, seated in his ancient and weather-worn



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New England farmhouse, before the blazing fire, enjoying the generous heat from a giant oak trunk, "which the Lord had felled," and which required all of his own great strength to get through the door and roll to the fireplace. It is "The Children's Hour." One daughter is encircled by his arm, another leans against his shoulder, while the youngest of the family sits contentedly upon his knee, and the eldest no farther away than is necessary, in a chair by herself. The contrast between the strong, white-haired man, massive in form and feature, seasoned with a wide knowledge of the world, and browned and furrowed by a

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life-time of exposure in the open air, and the fair, intelligent children clinging about him, jealously shielded from the world's taint, modest and unselfish, graceful and light-hearted, is perfect and highly fascinating. Firelight and shadow complete the effect—a superb *chiaroscuro*.

Mr. Murray died surrounded by his family. His last word was an inquiry for his eldest daughter, whom, through failing sight, he could not see. According to his request, he was buried on the old homestead, to which he was so much attached, under the historic buttonwood tree before referred to. There,

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on his ancestral farm, but a short distance from the gray old house where in life he had spent so many happy hours in the companionship of his wife and daughters, and where I had more than once known his hospitality; beneath the boughs where song-birds build their nests and sing their morning hymns and evening lullabies; surrounded by the odorous woodlands through which as boy and man he so often roamed in highest glee, and almost within sight of the blue waters of Long Island Sound (not quite two miles distant), repose the mortal remains of one of the greatest writers and thinkers, one of the noblest orators and

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preachers, and one of the keenest sportsmen and most devoted lovers of nature America has ever known.



















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